

## **Transforming Chief Selectees aboard USS Constitution**

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Kathryn E. Macdonald, USS Constitution Public Affairs

CHARLESTOWN, Mass. – USS Constitution wrapped up their 13<sup>th</sup> annual Chief Petty Officer (CPO) Heritage Weeks training for CPO selectees Sept. 3

Constitution's CPO mess designed CPO Heritage Weeks to instill pride in naval heritage and build esprit de corps while selectees lived and trained aboard the oldest commissioned warship afloat in the world.

“Constitution gives the opportunity to offer a historic training platform for the newest chief petty officers and the opportunity for our crew to show what we can do for the Navy,” said Constitution Command Master Chief (SW/SS/AW) David C. Twiford. “It also gives 300 selectees from around the world a chance to be mentored by 40 handpicked chiefs from around the fleet.”

CPO Heritage Weeks began Aug. 23 with Constitution's crew teaching selectees, including Coast Guardsmen and Sailors from the British Royal navy, a variety of time-honored maritime evolutions.

“Constitution has been a really great host to us,” said Petty Officer Clearance Diver Richard Ellis, British Royal navy. “We hope to take away an appreciation of the training you guys go through and how you manage your Sailors. We have different platforms of leadership between our two navies, but we plan to try to cross-pollinate your methods back into our training platforms.”

Selectees learned boarding pike and War of 1812 era gun drills using Constitution's traditional 24-pound naval long guns. They also learned small boat operations and how to climb the ship's shrouds.

Additionally, selectees supported the local community by helping at the New England Homeless Veterans Center, Old Soldier's Home in Chelsea, Mass. and Harvard-Kent Elementary School in Charlestown.

“The sense of heritage and the experience really hit me when we were out in public singing 'Anchors Aweigh,’” said Chief (select) Electronics Technician (SS/DV) John H. Vallas. “To see people coming up holding their hearts and you can see in their eyes, they were really proud.”

Mentor CPOs guide and train selectees as they endure the rigors of the CPO induction process.

“As a mentor chief, I hope that I instilled what it is to be a chief and the importance of taking care of your Sailors,” said Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman (AW) Michael Pike. “The selectees are going through a mental challenge, changing their thought process from 'me' to 'we,' and if you want to be successful, you have to take care of your Sailors and everything will follow.”

Constitution is located in the Charlestown Navy Yard in Boston. She welcomes more than 500,000 visitors a year. For more information on Constitution, visit [www.history.navy.mil/ussconstitution](http://www.history.navy.mil/ussconstitution) or <http://www.facebook.com/ussconstitutionofficial>.